

Using Critical Thinking Technology in Teaching Idioms to University Students

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Abstract: This article deals with issues of teaching idioms applying critical thinking method as traditional method does not promote these skills. Critical thinking skills are of great importance as they are required to produce competent cadres for global market economy. Teachers should focus on students' comprehending authentic speech and writing, additionally, think critically and analyze them.

Keywords: critical thinking, analyze, skills, idioms, competent

Higher education in Uzbekistan, gives priority to learning English to respond to the demands of world labour market which requires competitive and competent employees who can critically think, analyze and synthesise their ideas, issues before making decisions. However, many teachers do not focus students' attentions in order to foster these skills sufficiently when they are doing both oral and written assignments. Based on our teaching experience at English Department, I often find students unenthusiastic to exchange ideas critically and tend to accept experts' ideas without analyzing them properly. Again, this is probably because some of them previously studied at secondary schools which typically did not apply learner-centered approach and did not develop students' critical thinking skills optimally. Concerning on a similar problem, [4] argues that the main purpose of advanced education is the enhancement of student thinking. This is in line with today's concern that most graduates at all education levels do not perform higher level of thinking abilities.

In order to activate students' critical thinking skills, English teachers need to present alternatives, diverse ways of interpreting texts and diverse conceptions of the world. The importance of thinking in today's education requires the main concept of critical thinking in which there is always more than one way to see things and that it is always up to the individual to judge just where the truth lies on any given issue [5]. Regarding the flexible nature of critical thinking, we propose a teaching practice that can be modified in different ways. This is because the implementation of critical thinking skills and meaning in language teaching is not new and an absolute format has not been recommended so far. The underlying principle is that language learning is improved through increased motivation and naturally seen in meaningful contexts. When learners are interested in a topic and are given chances to negotiate meaning, they will be motivated to discuss things critically and at the same time, acquire language to communicate [6]. As stated in the introduction, both critical thinking skills and meaning can be incorporated when teachers do collaborative activities, i.e., pair work and group work. Therefore, we would illustrate teaching stages of an English lesson that essentially integrate critical thinking skills and meaning. For practical reasons, we would apply a series of teaching stages in a reading, writing and speaking lessons:

Activity1. Read newspaper headlines containing idioms and try to guess the meanings:

1. 22 January Police narrow down the list of facilitators Power and Authority
2. 30 January Steel mills told to lay off daily wage-earner Money
3. 6 February How a Pakistani girl ended up in arms of Da'ish Power and Authority
4. 25 February Jhagra to step into Mehtab's Shoes in K-P Power and Authority
5. 5 February Pakistan's indigenous T20 league kicks off Happiness and Sadness

Activity 2. Write an email letter inviting your friend to the birthday party using the following idioms:

1. I'll surely appear in the get-together you're holding for..
2. Fortunately, we do go for this party and ..
3. You are asked to show up in the..
4. We are having a cozy get-together...
5. Drop a line if you can ...

Activity 3. Write a congratulation letter to your friend using the following idioms:

1. over the moon/ On top of the world/ Thrilled to bits/ Made my day and jumped for joy: feel extremely happy and satisfied often a reaction to good news. (first paragraph)
2. Made a go of: been very successful with
3. Gave as good as you got: you proved yourself. (second paragraph)

Activity -4. Paraphrase some lines of the given letters using idioms:

1. IELTS Letter - Selling a TV
2. by ADIL - adilalaamri96@gmail.com (Oman)

You want to sell your television. You think a friend of yours might like to buy it from you.

Write a letter to your friend. In your letter explain:

1. Why you are selling the television
2. Describe the television
3. Suggest a date when your friend can come and see it

Hey my friend, how are you? I hope **you're good**. I **sent these letter** to you to inform you that I want to sell my T.V, so I thought I suppose to ask you first if you want to buy it.

I bought a new T.V last week, it's a **new model** that it came recently to the shops, it's a smart T.V which means you can touch the screen as the smart phones. So, I think I **don't need for my old T.V** because there is no space for it.

Now here are some details about the old T.V perhaps you want to buy it. It's an original one which had made by a **very famous electronic company** called LG, I think you know it. It has a built in receiver and DVD so you don't need to buy them. Also it has two remotes, one for the receiver and other one for the DVD.

You have the choice if you want it or not. I won't ask to another person to buy it until I receive your answer. I'll wait for until next Sunday which going to be the 3rd of March.

Activity -5. Read the conversation and draw the picture of the given idioms . Try to guess the meaning of idioms.

1. Mrs. Carter, do you have any idea when the exam results are going to come out?"

"Who knows Johnny, sometimes they come out quickly but it could take some time. You're just going to have to **sit tight** and wait."

2 "I don't understand why none of the girls here want to speak to me."

"It looks like you've **lost your touch** with the ladies."

"Oh no, they used to love me, what happened?"

3 "Did you hear that Sarah **stabbed Kate in the back** last week?"

"No! I thought they were best friends, what did she do?"

"She told their boss that Kate wasn't interested in a promotion at work and Sarah got it instead."

"Wow, that's the ultimate betrayal! No wonder they're not friends anymore."

4. "Jake, you should really come to the party tonight!"

"You know I can't, I have to **hit the books** (study)."

The implementation of critical thinking skills and meaning using idioms in English Language Teaching is worth doing to promote students' English competence. Those two important elements can be incorporated in English lessons as long as teachers do collaborative activities providing students sufficient exposure to thinking process and meaning negotiation. The variety of classroom activities does not only cater students' communicative competence, but also motivate them to master the target language. Indeed, this is an arduous task because the teachers have to make sure that the English lesson, involving both critical thinking skills and meaning, is reasonably inter-related and suitable to the level and needs of their student.

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